

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2020

VIA EMAIL: URGENT/IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General of the United States
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

I write to you regarding an urgent situation relating to the ongoing solicitation for bids for the Contract Postal Unit (CPU) in Spanish Fort, Alabama, which closed yesterday. As outlined below, local officials and I were personally misled by USPS employees regarding the situation with the CPU bidding process. Given the irregularities regarding this process and the total inadequacy of the solution proposed, I request you immediately withdraw the outstanding RFP, conduct an investigation into what has occurred, and restart the process with a solution that will actually meet the needs of the community.

Spanish Fort is one of the fastest growing communities in Alabama. Unfortunately, the citizens of Spanish Fort do not have a full-service Post Office and are served by a CPU. This CPU currently houses approximately 700 P.O. Boxes, which are vital for the local business community. The contract for this CPU is expiring in January 2021.

For over a year, my staff, local officials, and I have been engaging with USPS legislative affairs and local officials to advocate for a full service Spanish Fort Post Office to replace the CPU, which is the only solution that truly meets the needs of the community. My staff was told that a CPU was the only option for the community to maintain the current level of services. While I was unhappy with this solution, my staff and I informed USPS that the community could live with a replacement CPU as long as the 700 P.O. Boxes were maintained within Spanish Fort city limits.

As noted in the attached correspondence, my staff was directly told by USPS that "if there is no successful bidder, the postal service will move the 700 occupied PO Boxes to the Daphne PO." (Exhibit A). However, per your staff, "this is a last resort" (*Id.* (emphasis added)). During a phone call I personally had on November 2nd with Andrew Neal and Scott Slusher of USPS regarding this matter, I specifically raised this issue again. I was told that maintaining the P.O. Box service was part of the ongoing RFP process for the CPU, and that USPS was doing everything in its power to maintain the P.O. Boxes. This reflected what local officials had also been told by USPS.

Unfortunately, I learned yesterday that what local officials and I were told was not true. Yesterday, a copy of the current RFP for the new CPU was forwarded to my office. (Exhibit B). To my surprise and dismay, I learned that the proposal included no request that the bidder provide P.O. Box services at all. My staff contacted Andrew Neal in your office and inquired as to why the RFP did not contain a request that the bidder maintain the P.O. Boxes. For the first time, we were told that the Postal Service had already decided that the P.O. Boxes would not be continued in Spanish Fort, and that a notice would be going out in early December that the P.O. Boxes were being transferred to the Daphne Post Office.

Let me be clear: this is an entirely unacceptable solution. The Daphne Post Office is a 15-minute drive from Spanish Fort, and it is unworkable and unreasonable to ask that the Spanish Fort community

give up the 700 Boxes that are needed for families and the business community to instead make a 30+ minute round trip.

My staff continued to press legislative affairs on this issue yesterday. They were at first told by Scott Slusher that contrary to what Mr. Neal told us, the P.O. Boxes could still be maintained at the CPU assuming there was an acceptable bid. When my staff pointed out that the P.O. Boxes were not mentioned in the RFP at all, legislative affairs was at first unhappy that we had obtained a copy of the RFP but finally admitted that the P.O Boxes would not be maintained. My staff was told this was due to a collective bargaining agreement that now prohibits CPUs from operating P.O. Boxes.

If it is true that collective bargaining restrictions in fact prevent the P.O. Boxes from being maintained at a new CPU, this of course brings this entire issue full circle. The community needs a full-service Post Office, which the local community would be happy to have serviced by members of the union covered under the collective bargaining agreement. Consequently, I renew my request that the community be provided the full-service Post Office it needs and deserves. The City of Spanish Fort is willing and ready to help facilitate a free-standing post office in a timely and affordable manner.

The bottom line is this entire process has been irregular and must be started anew. In closing, I again respectfully ask that you intervene, investigate this situation, cancel the current RFP, and start over with a solution that meets the needs of the community. Should you have any questions, please contact Matthew Bishop in my office at Matthew.Bishop@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bradley Byrne', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bradley Byrne
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight & Reform
The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight & Reform
The Honorable Michael M. McMillan, Mayor, Spanish Fort
Judy S. Mannings, Alabama Legislative Chair for the National Association of Postal Supervisors
Sharon McIntosh, President, American Postal Workers, Local 715